

POLITICS AND MORALS

329

of *raison d'état* in the sphere of international relations that the world has ever seen, and he scoffed at "Professor Gladstone" for worshipping other gods. The cession of the Ionian Islands to Greece was interpreted by him as a sign that England was exhausted, since, according to his philosophy, virile nations

award. But the Gladstonian gospel does not seem to us quite so doctrinaire to-day, when the bitter taste of the fruits of Bismarckian realism is in our mouths. Before he evolved into the greatest Liberal statesman of the nineteenth century he made his profession of faith in the Don Pacifico debate of 1850. Rebuking the high-handed methods of Palmerston and rejecting the distinction between politics and morals, he envisaged the relations of nations in terms not of difference of military power but of equality of rights.

Twenty years later Gladstone was Prime Minister and the triumph of German arms over France touched him to the quick. To the winning side the recovery of Alsace and Lorraine appealed not so much the spoils of victory as the undoing of historic wrongs, perpetrated by a greedy neighbour before the German nation became a political unit able to resist attack. To Gladstone, on the other hand, it seemed a moral wrong and for that reason a political error. In a Memorandum to Granville, written shortly after Sedan, he deplored the probable annexation of over a million people "who, with their ancestors for several generations, have known France for their country. The transfer of the allegiance and citizen-ship, of no small part of the heart and life, of human beings from one sovereignty to another without any reference to their own consent has been a great reproach to former trans-

actions in Europe; has led to many wars and disturbances; is hard to reconcile with considerations of equity, and is repulsive to the sense of modern civilization." Germany, he admitted, was entitled to take ample precautions against her defeated foe. But ^ras the acquisition of Alsace-Lorraine the only way ? " It seems worth while to consider whether the military neutralization of the territory and the destruction of all its fortresses would not, without being withdrawn from French allegiance, obtain the object of giving security to Germany." When Granville replied that nothing could be done, the Prime Minister rejoined: " I am much oppressed with the idea that this transfer of human beings like chattels